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PROPOSED REVISIONS TO THE MEDIUM-TERM PLAN FOR THE PERIOD 1992-1997*

MAJOR PROGRAMME VII. HUMAN RIGHTS, FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS AND HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS

Programme 37. Emergency humanitarian assistance

1. The preparation, format and content of the medium-term plan and its revisions are governed by the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation (ST/SGB/PPBME Rules/1(1987)).

2. Regulation 3.11 provides, inter alia, that the medium-term plan shall be revised as necessary every two years to incorporate required programme changes and that the proposed revisions shall be as detailed as required to incorporate the programme implications of the resolutions and decisions adopted by the intergovernmental organs or international conferences since the adoption of the plan.

3. The revised programme 37, Emergency humanitarian assistance, replaces the narrative of programme 37, Disaster relief and mitigation, and special emergency programmes, of the medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997, which was adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 45/253 of 21 December 1990 and issued in document A/45/6/Rev.1.

4. Owing to the proposed new structure and extensive revisions proposed for programme 37, the complete text of the programme narrative and its complement of subprogrammes is presented below, replacing the narrative and subprogramme structure of programme 37 in document A/45/6/Rev.1 in its entirety.

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* After adoption by the General Assembly at its forty-seventh session, the complete revised medium-term plan will be issued in final printed form as Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 6 (A/47/6/Rev.1).

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PROGRAMME 37. EMERGENCY HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

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A. Programme

1. General orientation

37.1 The general mandate for the programme derives from the Charter of the United Nations, in particular Articles 1 and 55, which refer to international cooperation in solving problems of an economic and humanitarian character. The legislative authority for disaster relief and mitigation of natural disasters derives from General Assembly resolution 2816 (XXVI) of 14 December 1971, by which the Assembly established UNDRO and provided its basic terms of reference, as well as subsequent resolutions of the Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. The Assembly, in resolution 44/236 of 22 December 1989, also proclaimed the 1990s the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction and adopted the International Framework of Action for the Decade.

37.2 The legislative authority for the United Nations response to complex emergency situations stems originally from the resolutions adopted annually by the General Assembly, in which it requested the Secretary-General to coordinate the provision of humanitarian aid and assistance to a substantial number of countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America. Those programmes were usually called for or set up in response to complex emergency situations that involved multiple factors and included sensitive political issues and that frequently required the Secretary-General to coordinate the related efforts of many organizations within and beyond the United Nations system.

37.3 The General Assembly, at its forty-sixth session, adopted resolution 46/182 of 19 December 1991, entitled "Strengthening the coordination of humanitarian emergency assistance of the United Nations". The General Assembly expressed its deep concern about "the suffering of the victims of disasters and emergency situations, the loss in human lives, the flow of refugees, the mass displacement of people and the material destruction", and emphasized "the need to strengthen further and make more effective the collective efforts of the international community, in particular the United Nations system, in providing humanitarian assistance".

37.4 In the annex to resolution 46/182, section I, "Guiding principles", the General Assembly laid down the principles governing the provision of such assistance. As regards the United Nations, it stated that:

(a) The United Nations has a central and unique role to play in providing leadership and in coordinating humanitarian efforts;

(b) The United Nations should ensure the prompt and smooth delivery of relief assistance in full respect of the "Guiding principles" referred to above;

(c) The United Nations system needs to be adapted and strengthened to meet the present and future challenges in an effective and coherent manner;

(d) The United Nations should be provided with resources commensurate with future requirements for emergency assistance.

37.5 Sections II to VII of the annex to the resolution outlined the overall objectives of the United Nations in the field of coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance and recommended a series of actions to ameliorate the problems addressed. The resolution called, inter alia, for:

(a) Better preparation and a more coherent response to natural disasters and other emergencies through the designation of an emergency relief coordinator;

(b) Establishment of a stand-by capacity in disaster prevention and mitigation through a central register of relief personnel and resources, support arrangements with Governments and other partners, to assist developing countries in their efforts to cope with all emergencies;

(c) Establishment of a central emergency revolving fund to ensure the rapid and coordinated response of the organizations of the system;

(d) Establishment within the United Nations of special emergency rules and procedures for the quick disbursement of emergency funds, procurement of emergency supplies and equipment as well as recruitment of emergency staff, to ensure a prompt and appropriate response to humanitarian needs;

(e) Establishing and enhancing integrated disaster mitigation programmes at the national and regional levels as well as promoting greater exchange and dissemination of relevant technology;

(f) A strengthened and broadened disaster management training programme to improve the capacity of disaster-prone developing countries to mitigate the effect of disasters and emergency situations;

(g) A systematic pooling, analysis and dissemination of early warning information to enhance preparedness, and the effectiveness and efficiency of national efforts to cope with emergencies.

37.6 The broad orientation of the programme derives from these provisions of resolution 46/182, and its objectives will be to ensure better preparation for, as well as a rapid and coherent response to emergencies, natural and man-made, thus reducing the suffering and loss of human lives and material destruction; promoting prevention and preparedness; and ensuring smooth transition from relief to rehabilitation and development.

2. Overall strategy

37.7 The programme will be implemented by the Department of Humanitarian Affairs, which is the organizational entity recently established to provide a strengthened and coordinated response to emergency humanitarian assistance.

37.8 The overall strategy is to draw on the capacity of the United Nations system and on the cooperation of concerned Governments, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, and to achieve a coordinated and focused approach to the broad range of humanitarian assistance and its linkage with other areas through effective coordination mechanisms and a network of contacts with all parties involved.

37.9 The Department's role in assisting Governments to take measures of prevention and preparedness is the provision of advice; setting up emergency preparedness units; training the personnel of such units; and the planning of policies as well as assisting, where appropriate, with their implementation.

37.10 The Department has the responsibility, building on the existing capacity of relevant entities and organizations of the United Nations system, to ensure the systematic pooling, analysis and dissemination of early-warning information on natural disasters and other emergencies. This information will be made available in an unrestricted and timely manner to all interested Governments and concerned authorities, particularly of affected or disaster-prone countries. An information management system will be developed, facilitating the exchange of information between field and headquarters, and organizations and focal points.

37.11 Mobilizing and coordinating international relief efforts and serving as a clearing-house for related activities and information are areas central to this programme. Where appropriate, the Department launches, on behalf of the Secretary-General, an appeal for international assistance. Activities include on-site assessment of damage and needs, if necessary by inter-agency assessment missions, as well as the provision of timely information on relief requirements and available assistance.

37.12 The Department will take appropriate steps to enhance the response capacity of the international community and in particular United Nations system preparedness, through the utilization of the Central Emergency Revolving Fund, development of a central register of relief resources, including specialized personnel and teams of technical specialists as well as relief supplies, equipment and services, by making arrangements for cooperation with Governments and other partners, and by developing special emergency rules and procedures for the disbursement of funds, recruitment of personnel and procurement of equipment and supplies.

37.13 As part of a rapid and effective activation of stand-by mechanisms and emergency procedures, the Department will manage an emergency response operations centre for real-time liaison with the affected country, and with scientific monitoring institutions, technical units of operational United Nations agencies, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and donor Governments. This centre will provide for speedy information collection, analysis and dissemination to appropriate organizations, facilitating and providing a focal point for a coordinated international response. The emergency response operations centre will also provide an appropriate base for emergency inter-agency programming exercises in the case of major emergencies. In such cases, an initial appeal will be launched within one week, followed by inter-agency assessment missions and within four weeks, an integrated, consolidated appeal. The centre will provide the necessary support for such comprehensive exercises.

37.14 The response of the United Nations agencies to emergencies is coordinated through the newly created Inter-agency Standing Committee (IASC) under the chairmanship of the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, which will devote specific attention to complex emergencies, while coordination with aid donors will be accomplished through, inter alia, the long-established Humanitarian Liaison Working Group.

37.15 As stated in paragraph 10 of the guiding principles contained in the annex to General Assembly resolution 46/182, economic growth and sustainable development are essential for the prevention of, and preparedness against, natural disasters and other emergencies. Many emergencies reflect the underlying crisis in development facing the country concerned. The Department will endeavour to ensure that emergency relief assistance is planned and delivered in such a way that the continuum from relief to rehabilitation and development is promoted and integrated into the operational agencies programmes through the Inter-agency Standing Committee mechanisms.

37.16 The Department of Humanitarian Affairs cooperates with UNDP both at Headquarters and in the field, where the United Nations resident coordinator, who in most cases is also the UNDP resident representative, also represents the Department. In a number of situations the resident coordinator has been appointed the special coordinator for emergency relief operations.

37.17 The Department of Humanitarian Affairs is also the focal point, as a result of a decision by the Administrative Committee on Coordination, for the Inter-agency Consultations on Disaster Management, which has the following participants: Department of Humanitarian Affairs, UNCHS, UNEP, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNDP, WFP, ILO, FAO, UNESCO, ICAO, WHO, World Bank, IMF, ITU, WMO, IMO, UNIDO and IAEA. The functions of the African Emergency Task Force, which had the following members, Department of Humanitarian Affairs/UNDRO, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNDP, WFP, FAO and WHO, have been assumed by the Inter-agency Standing Committee.

37.18 As regards the implementation of the International Framework of Action for the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction, the General Assembly, in resolution 44/236 of 22 December 1989, recalled the specific responsibilities and functions of UNDRO in the field of disaster prevention and preparedness, and assigned the role of overseeing and coordinating related activities of the United Nations system to the Director-General for Development and International Economic Cooperation. The Department of Humanitarian Affairs has assumed the responsibilities of UNDRO and those of the Director-General regarding the secretariat of the International Decade, as well as the implementation of the International Framework of Action for the Decade.

3. Subprogramme structure and priorities

37.19 The programme on emergency humanitarian assistance consists of the following subprogrammes:

Subprogramme 1. Policy planning and development

Subprogramme 2. Disaster prevention and preparedness

Subprogramme 3. Emergency information management

Subprogramme 4. Disaster relief

Subprogramme 5. Complex humanitarian emergencies

37.20 Subprogrammes 1, 4 and 5 are designated high priority, as they embody the emphasis of General Assembly resolution 46/182.

B. Subprogrammes

SUBPROGRAMME 1. POLICY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

(a) Objectives

37.21 The adoption of General Assembly resolution 46/182 constitutes a turning point in the way the international community deals with the delivery of humanitarian assistance. In formulating the principles incorporated in resolution 46/182, the Member States identified numerous problems and shortcomings in the then prevailing response of the United Nations system to natural and man-made emergencies and the ensuing mass displacement of populations and destruction, and made a concerted effort to reform the old practice and prepare the United Nations for the numerous challenges of the years ahead.

37.22 The overall objective of this subprogramme is to fulfil effectively the leadership role entrusted to the Secretary-General to ensure better preparation for, as well as rapid and coherent responses to, natural disasters and other emergencies, reducing the suffering and loss of human life and material destruction, and promoting the continuum from prevention and preparedness, through relief and humanitarian assistance, to rehabilitation and development.

37.23 There are three specific objectives of this subprogramme:

(a) To ensure effective United Nations response to emergencies through the formulation of system-wide policies and plans of action, in close cooperation with all concerned;

(b) To facilitate through various actions, including negotiations, the delivery of humanitarian assistance to the victims of emergencies;

(c) To monitor and evaluate emergencies with a view to recommending ways of improving humanitarian assistance.

37.24 The subprogramme will involve primarily the planning, development and evaluation of the activities undertaken by the Department of Humanitarian Affairs in fulfilment of its mandate. This includes applied research and continuous monitoring on the various assignments and functions of the Department in New York and Geneva to ensure that coordination and programme implementation with regard to ongoing humanitarian emergencies are effectively undertaken. These considerations are closely linked to the active exercise of humanitarian diplomacy, to early warning and monitoring and to the examination of the link between relief, rehabilitation and long-term socio-economic development. The subprogramme will connect these specific aspects of the coordination of humanitarian assistance with a constant attempt to view the tasks of the Department in the context of overall development in the global system as far as the political, economic, social, ecological and technological dimensions are concerned.

(b) Course of action of the Secretariat

37.25 Prevention and preparedness are the first steps in the continuum of disaster and emergency management. An area of prevention for which this subprogramme is responsible relates to preventive humanitarian diplomacy. As conflicts develop in an area, the United Nations may be in a position to undertake efforts that, if successful, could reduce human suffering and displacement, thus, in turn, reducing the need for relief to victims. Implementation of this subprogramme requires constant access to current information for analysis, the charting of courses of action and undertaking, as appropriate, negotiations. This activity requires close cooperation and coordination with operational organizations of the United Nations system, Governments, and relevant intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations. It would also require, within the United Nations, close cooperation with the departments in the political and developmental fields.

37.26 In a number of ongoing conflicts, the access of humanitarian assistance is hindered by the parties to the conflict. The Department of Humanitarian Affairs will seek to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian assistance and undertake, if necessary, negotiations with the parties concerned. It will closely follow the preparations of decisions by the Security Council that affect or deal with the delivery of humanitarian assistance.

37.27 The Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs is the Chairman of IASC, which is composed of the heads of the United Nations agencies that focus on the various aspects of humanitarian assistance. IASC meets whenever required, to review overall policy issues, inter-agency coordination and recommendations of its working group on policy aspects of operations.

37.28 The Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs is responsible for the management of the Central Emergency Revolving Fund, designed to ensure the rapid and coordinated response of organizations of the United Nations system to requests for emergency assistance. The Department also launches consolidated inter-agency appeals for the mobilization of emergency assistance from the international community.

37.29 The Department will endeavour to ensure that the continuum from relief to rehabilitation and development becomes a standard feature of emergency relief programmes, making this a major feature of its policy planning process. Given that all emergency programmes are dependent on voluntary contributions, the Department of Humanitarian Affairs will endeavour to ensure that the interest of donors in a given country is sustained beyond the stage of immediate relief into that of rehabilitation and eventual development.

SUBPROGRAMME 2: DISASTER PREVENTION AND PREPAREDNESS

(a) Objectives

37.30 The original legislative authority for the subprogramme derives from General Assembly resolutions 41/201, paragraphs 3 and 5, 43/204, paragraph 2, and 44/236, annex, paragraphs 5, 9 and 14; and Economic and Social Council resolution 1988/51, paragraphs 3 and 4. The most recent authority derives from General Assembly resolution 46/182, paragraphs 13 to 18 of the annex.

37.31 Prevention and preparedness are the first steps in what might be termed the cycle of disaster management. They include permanent improvements in disaster mitigation and temporary measures for protection from or evasion of disaster impact. Mitigation techniques have in recent years become better defined, more comprehensive and therefore more widely applicable.

37.32 In most disaster-prone developing countries there is a lack of disaster mitigation infrastructure, that is, a shortage of trained personnel at administrative and technical levels, as well as the necessary resources and expertise to promote mitigation at all stages of pre-investment, and investment in disaster-prone areas. The subprogramme aims to address these problems.

37.33 Prevention and preparedness for disasters and complex emergency situations is a long and painstaking process. Its success is difficult to assess in terms of indicators, for successful mitigation is ideally a succession of non-events, that is, the absence of damage or socio-economic disruption. Also, it is difficult to obtain financing from the donor community for disaster mitigation programmes; such programmes do not appeal as strongly to the donors as do requests for immediate assistance, in the wake of a disaster. Without adequate preparedness and prevention measures, however, disasters will continue to occur and their impact will increase in severity.

37.34 The main objective of this subprogramme is twofold:

(a) To transmit relevant knowledge and implementing capacity to disaster-prone developing countries involving policies and measures that can be taken in advance of a disaster or other emergency to reduce their impact;

(b) To enhance the flow and exchange of information between all agencies and institutions that deal with the substance of prevention and mitigation techniques so that this experience can be shared and put to optimal use in as many contexts as possible.

(b) Course of action of the Secretariat

37.35 Within the overall objective and goals of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction contained in the International Framework of Action, the Department will emphasize the development and application of the following policies and measures:

(a) Identification of prevailing hazards and assessment of their frequency of occurrence for different levels of magnitude;

(b) Estimation of risk, that is, the human and material losses that can be expected from given disaster scenarios, the formulation of strategies to counter those risks, and measures for early warning of their likely occurrence;

(c) Formulation, and implementation, where resources permit, of comprehensive disaster mitigation policies and programmes in collaboration with other international agencies;

(d) Assisting in the creation of governmental and institutional structures responsible for disaster mitigation;

(e) Exchange of information and dissemination of technical knowledge at the regional or subregional level;

(f) Training of those responsible for the technical and management aspects of disaster mitigation.

Those policies and measures have a logical sequence. As countries advance in certain areas, assistance will be provided in filling the gaps identified in others. In view of the magnitude of the problems, while some of the policies and measures can be implemented during the medium-term, others will require a longer period.

37.36 The Department of Humanitarian Affairs will continue the development and refinement of those mitigation techniques and to diffuse them widely by preparing compendiums and manuals, organizing training seminars and workshops, as well as carrying out technical cooperation projects at the national and regional levels. Such technical cooperation activities will include the provision of expertise, the exchange of experience between disaster-prone developing countries, especially within the same region, the provision of training and the granting of fellowships. Financial resources for such activities will be sought from UNDP, regional development agencies and interested donor countries and organizations. In carrying out the activities under its mandate, as well as those which will be carried out in close association with the secretariat of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction, the Department of Humanitarian Affairs will continue to promote strengthened support for disaster mitigation activities generated by the International Decade. The Decade secretariat receives substantive guidance from a scientific and technical committee, composed of 25 senior scientists, and a special high-level council assists in creating global awareness about natural disaster reduction.

37.37 Within that context, the strategy will emphasize the following:

(a) Working closely with UNDP at the field level and formalizing mutually complementary arrangements to introduce disaster mitigation systematically into the UNDP country and regional/interregional programmes;

(b) Evaluating research findings in hazard assessment and monitoring and promoting their application;

(c) Undertaking studies of past disaster losses as a guide to the evaluation of future risks;

(d) Developing scenarios that are more likely to portray future risk and preparing work programmes for the step-by-step application of disaster mitigation techniques applicable to such scenarios;

(e) Developing suitable procedures for issuing warnings, determining evacuation criteria and managing evacuations;

(f) Providing guidance through specialized seminars and workshops, manuals and publications.

SUBPROGRAMME 3. EMERGENCY INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

(a) Objectives

37.38 The legislative authority for the subprogramme derives from General Assembly resolutions 2816 (XXVI), 41/70, 41/201, 43/204, 44/164, 44/236 and 46/182.

37.39 Efficient management of accurate and timely emergency information, including the availability of early warning systems, is crucial in ensuring effective mitigation of the potentially negative impact of impending emergencies and an effective response to such emergencies when they occur. Timely and accurate information facilitates prompt appropriate and coordinated responses. Sound and targeted information on hazards worldwide, on levels of risk and vulnerability, and on capacities to address these situations, are essential to disaster reduction programmes. Finally, the fruitful transfer of knowledge depends on the availability of comprehensive and up-to-date information on disaster management policies, programmes, practices, techniques and technologies.

37.40 The specific objectives of the subprogramme are as follows:

(a) To collect, analyse and disseminate timely, accurate and comprehensive information that can increase the effectiveness and efficiency of emergency/disaster management;

(b) To develop and maintain information management systems, procedures and methodologies that capitalize on cost-effective information and telecommunications technologies, and facilitate information and data exchange;

(c) To inform on and promote disaster/emergency management concepts, techniques and activities that can reduce the risk of disasters and their destructive impact.

(b) Course of action of the Secretariat

37.41 This subprogramme will provide technical support to the other subprogrammes and undertake the following activities, some of which have been endorsed by the scientific and technical committee of the Decade:

(a) Introduce new or strengthen existing communications technologies that will provide real-time or near real-time collection, analysis and dissemination of emergency related information, and a records management system to facilitate build up, and access to, institutional memory. The present information management communications and information system will be further developed. The local area network system will be extended to access the wide area network, creating close operational links between the Department of Humanitarian Affairs, the Pisa Warehouse and the United Nations disaster management teams. A computerized record management system will be established to build up an institutional memory.

(b) Establishment and development of an emergency response operations centre to enable a more reliable and systematic approach to information

management for international emergency preparedness and response, including avoidance of waste and duplication in relief efforts and improved mobilization of resources.

(c) Development and maintenance of updated registers and databases of disaster management training institutions, national relief officials, disaster case histories, including country disaster management profiles, and stock inventories.

(d) Development and systematization of early warning systems, both for sudden natural disasters and other emergencies, in particular the development of procedures for alerting to situations where humanitarian assistance may be needed.

(e) Further development of the United Nations International Emergency Network, which is the Department's electronic information global network for emergencies, now utilized by 190 institutions in 45 countries, including United Nations organizations, non-governmental organizations, universities and libraries. The Network, which already features emergency contacts and situation reports, resource material from UNHCR, special alerts and reports from FAO, field activities from WHO, PAHO and other organizations, and the Decade national committees, will increase its linkages with international systems such as InterNet. The Department will continue to support international collaborative efforts for strengthening the International Emergency Readiness and Response Information System as a mechanism for decision-making in international preparedness and response.

(f) Publication of information manuals and newsletters, as well as the production of pamphlets on issues, problems and the response capacity of the United Nations system; and further development of the Department's reference library.

(g) Production of video films, and the convening of conferences, seminars and symposia designed to promote the exchange of emergency-related information and improve efficiency in disaster management.

(h) Conceptualization, development and implementation of emergency management training programmes, including the joint Department of Humanitarian Affairs/UNDP disaster management training programme.

SUBPROGRAMME 4. DISASTER RELIEF

(a) Objectives

37.42 The legislative authority for the subprogramme derives from General Assembly resolutions 41/70, 41/201, paragraphs 4, 6, 8 and 10, 43/204, paragraphs 1, 2 and 3, 44/164 and 46/182, annex, paragraphs 27 to 39.

37.43 The extent of destruction caused by a natural disaster or other emergency or by the displacement of populations as a result of civil strife may be such that the affected country requires immediate external aid in order to restore normal living conditions, or it may be that foreign resources and expertise are required to complement national relief efforts. In these emergency situations, emergency humanitarian assistance and/or international

cooperation are required in ways that are in accordance with international law and national laws and are supportive of recovery and sustainable development. The subprogramme aims to address these issues.

37.44 In such instances, disaster-stricken countries need specialized assistance to launch and develop a concerted international relief response. Prospective donors must be informed rapidly of the actual needs in an affected area as well as of the measures under way to meet them, so that appropriate aid can reach the victims or displaced persons in the shortest possible time. With the technological advancement of communications and the growing awareness of the global public, the international response to emergencies has widened in scope.

37.45 If international aid is not well coordinated and donors are not kept informed of other contributions, inappropriate supplies may be sent to the disaster site, thereby causing congestion while urgent needs of the victims remain unmet. Lack of on-site coordination and technical knowledge of relief procedures could hinder the effective implementation of multilateral relief operations. Adequate United Nations system and international preparedness are a prerequisite for ensuring an accelerated and effective response. Preparedness measures require the development of effective stand-by mechanisms, emergency procedures and arrangements for coordination and cooperation, which must be in place before an emergency occurs. Situations that may develop into emergencies need to be constantly monitored, so that appropriate relief action can be initiated without delay.

37.46 The objectives of the subprogramme are as follows:

(a) To promote and facilitate coordination of relief activities undertaken by the United Nations system and the international community and at the national and international levels;

(b) To assist in the mobilization of resources for emergency relief operations;

(c) To facilitate immediate support to disaster-stricken countries in needs assessment, mobilization and coordination of international relief during the emergency phase, and assistance in establishing special mechanisms that might be required in complex emergencies.

(b) Course of action of the Secretariat

37.47 The following course of action will be undertaken:

(a) Development and maintenance of a stand-by capacity, consisting of:

(i) The Central Emergency Revolving Fund (CERF);

(ii) A central register of specialized personnel, teams of technical specialists, relief supplies, equipment and services potentially available to the United Nations at short notice from within the United Nations system and from Governments and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations;

(iii) Development of prior arrangements with Governments and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations by which the United Nations could have expeditious access to their emergency relief capacities, including food reserves, emergency stockpiles and personnel, as well as logistical support;

(iv) Formulation of special emergency rules and procedures for the United Nations system for the quick disbursement of funds, recruitment of personnel and procurement of supplies and equipment required in emergency situations;

(v) Support for the efforts of the international community to enhance response capacity and coordination, through activities such as regional and interregional search and rescue cooperation, and stockpiling of relief supplies;

(b) Facilitation of relief coordination and resource mobilization at the country and international levels, by:

(i) Needs assessment, if required through fielding of teams or inter-agency missions;

(ii) Rapid and cost-effective collection and broad dissemination to the international community of consolidated information related to emergencies and relief operations, including timely, accurate and regularly adjusted assessments of needs and systematically updated records of contributions balanced against relief requirements;

(iii) Establishment of an emergency response operations centre by the Department, equipped with advanced technology for monitoring early warning information; activation of stand-by mechanisms and emergency procedures; real-time liaison with the affected country, scientific monitoring institutions, technical units of United Nations operational agencies, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and donors;

(c) Provision of assistance to national authorities for search and rescue operations, relief coordination, supply logistics and distribution of relief material at the disaster site;

(d) Granting direct assistance in the form of resources and expertise to an affected country;

(e) Strengthening cooperation with UNDP, notably at the country level through support to the disaster management team, and with other United Nations organizations, in all phases of an emergency, including the transition from relief to rehabilitation and reconstruction;

(f) Supporting efforts of United Nations organizations in reducing the impact of industrial, chemical and nuclear disasters;

(g) Maintaining an overview of all emergencies through the systematic pooling and analysis of early warning information.

SUBPROGRAMME 5. COMPLEX HUMANITARIAN EMERGENCIES

(a) Objectives

37.48 Historically, it has been specific resolutions of the General Assembly, adopted as a result of a given situation that called upon the Secretary-General to respond to complex emergencies. Among these are General Assembly resolution 42/205 on emergency assistance to nine countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America; 45/137 on refugees, returnees and displaced persons in Southern Africa; 45/226 on the Sudan; 45/227 on Mozambique; 45/229 on Somalia; 45/232 on Liberia; and 45/223 on Angola.

37.49 In the light of the increasing number of complex emergency situations, the General Assembly adopted resolution 46/182 which established the guiding principles and laid the foundation for strengthening the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance.

37.50 Within the United Nations system, complex emergency situations are considered to be those which require the concerted response of specialized organizations of the system (e.g. UNHCR, WFP, UNICEF and WHO), and usually involve multiple factors and include politically sensitive issues.

37.51 The objective of this subprogramme is to support the mechanisms for operational coordination and inter-agency programming through the Inter-agency Standing Committee, through the United Nations resident coordinators in the field, and through other coordinating forums, in order to facilitate a coordinated and coherent response to major complex emergencies affecting large numbers of persons suffering from famine or displaced by civil strife or other disorders.

(b) Course of action of the Secretariat

37.52 The Department of Humanitarian Affairs will establish an inter-agency support unit composed primarily of staff seconded from United Nations agencies involved in emergency operations. This Unit will prepare the issues for discussion by IASC and follow up its decisions. It will liaise with the United Nations resident coordinators on operational matters, ensuring the development of close inter-agency cooperation at the field level. It will also develop systems for, and promote, effective inter-agency field assessments, programming, preparation of consolidated appeals, harmonizing policy approaches to relief operations, creating unified methods and structures for delivering assistance in the field, and developing reporting procedures and overall follow-up of programme implementation.

37.53 Once a major complex emergency programme has been launched, a special programme unit will be established, if necessary, to:

(a) Monitor and report on the emergency situation;

(b) Collect and process data and provide information on operational developments;

(c) Assist in resource mobilization;

(d) Facilitate operations as necessary.

These special programme units will work closely with the inter-agency support unit to ensure concerted humanitarian assistance and its delivery to affected populations by the most efficient and cost-effective methods.